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Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00

PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-03 EB-11 COME-00

TRSE-00 FRB-03 CIEP-03 AID-20 IO-14 NIC-01 DRC-01

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R 031035Z AUG 74
FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5715
INFO AMEMBASSY COTONOU
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 1088

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, GB, DM
SUBJ: DAHOMIAN PRESIDENT KEREKOU'S VISIT TO GABON

REF: LIBREVILLE 0164

1. DAHOMIAN PRESIDENT KEREKOU CONCLUDED 5-DAY VISIT TO GABON AUGUST 30. IN ADDITION TO USUAL PROTOCOLE EVENTS IN LIBREVILLE (WERATH-LAYING, RECEIVING KEY TO CITY, PRESENTATION TO DIPLOMATIC CORPS, AND STATE BANQUET AT PRESIDENCY), KEREKOU, BONGO AND THEIR ENTOURAGES MADE USUAL PILGRIMAGES TO PORT-GENTIL AND TO FRANCEVILLE. IN LATTER AREA, THEY VISITED URANIUM AND MANGANESE MINES AND PRESIDENT BONGO'S HOME TERRITORY.

2. DAHOMIAN DELEGATION INCLUDED MAJOR MICHEL ALLADAYE, MINISTER OF FOREIGNAFFAIRS; MAJOR PIERRE KOFFI, MINISTER OF CIVIL SERVICE AND LABOR; AND CAPTAIN AUGUSTIN HONVO, MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND TOURISM.

3. IN EXCHANGING TOASTS AT STATE BANQUET AUGUST 26, TWO PRESIDENTS DEFINED THEIR RESPECTIVE "REVOLUTIONS." BONGO
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STRESSED HIS PHILOSOPHY OF "GABON FIRST" AND NOTED ONLY REVOLUTION HERE IS AN ECONOMIC ONE. COUNTERPOINTING BONGO'S

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STATEMENT, KEREKOU STATED DAHOMIAN REVOLUTION DOES NOT IMPLY DISORDER OR ANARCHY BUT AS AN AUTHENTIC REVOLUTION IS DEVOID OF FOREIGN IDEOLOGIES.

4. JOINT COMMUNIQUE SIGNED BY FOREGN MINISTER IN FRANCEVILLE PRIOR TO KEREKOU RETURN TO COTONOU AND BONGO DEPARTURE FOR BRAZZAVILLE MEETING OF EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICAN CHIEFS OF STATE BEGAN WITH BOILER PLATE. SIMILARITY OF TWO NATIONS' VIEWS ON CURRENT MAJOR WORLD PROBLEMS WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF AFRICAN SOLIDARITY NOTED. IN INTERNATIONAL FIELDS, BOTH LEADERS PLEDGED SUPPORT FOR WORLD PEACE, FOR INTER-AFRICAN COOPERATION, FOR CHARTERS OF UN AND OAU AND FOR PRINCIPLES OF NON-INTERFERENCE AND PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF CONFLICTS. SATISFACTION EXPRESSED AT PORTUGUESE DECISION TO GRANT INDEPENDENCE TO AFRICAN COLONIES.

5. TWO BILATERAL ACCORDS SIGNED, ONE COVERING CULTURAL COOPERATION, THE OTHER ESTABLISHING A MIXED COMMISSION SCHEDULED TO MEET FOR FIRST TIME BEFORE YEAR'S END IN COTONOU. IN BRIEF CONCLUDING ASIDE, PRESIDENT KEREKOU CONGRATULATED BONGO FOR "PRODIGIOUS LEAP" ACHIEVED BY GABONESE ECONOMY AND APPLAUDED "PERFECT FRANKNESS" WHICH CHARACTERIZED TALKS WITH BONGO.

6. PRESIDENT KEREKOU IN FRANCEVILLE PRESS CONFERENCE DISMISSED CURRENT PORTUGUESE POLICY TOWARD AFRICA AS "NON-HEROIC" BECAUSE ADOPTED UNDER PRESSURE OF CIRCUMSTANCES. HE THEN TURNED TO DAHOMIAN PROBLEMS, DESCRIBING THE TRAINING OF DAHOMIANS UNDER THE FORMER REGIME AS "A MYSTIFICATION" BECAUSE TRAINING HAD BEEN "NEO-COLONIAL." IN ADDITION KEREKOU NOTED MANY OF DAHOMEY'S TRAINED CITIZENS WERE CURRENTLY ABROAD THOUGH AN APPEAL HAD BEEN SENT OUT FOR THEIR RETURN TO DAHOMEY TO "WORK AT THE SIDE OF THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT."

7. COMMENT. WE UNDERSTAND FROM A GABONESE SOURCE CLOSE TO THE PRESIDENCY THAT BEHIND THE OFFICIAL CEREMONIES AND STATEMENTS THE KEREKOU VISIT WAS NOT PARTICULARLY SUCCESSFUL FROM EITHER NATION'S STANDPOINT. ON THE ONE
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HAND, KEREKOU'S REVOLUTIONARY SENSIBILITIES WERE REPORTEDLY AFFRONTED BY THE CASCADES OF CHAMPAGNE AND THE CAVALCADES OF MERCEDES WHICH ACCOMPANIED HIS VARIOUS OFFICIAL VISITS. ALSO KEREKOU'S STATEMENTS ABOUT THE NON-AVAILABILITY AND NON-SUITABILITY OF DAHOMIAN TECHNICIANS PROBABLY ACCOMPANIED A PRIVATE REBUFF TO WHAT WE UNDERSTAND WAS PRESIDENT BONGO'S REQUEST FOR DAHOMIANS TO WORK ON THE TRANSGABON RAILROAD.
COUNTRYMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ESTABLISHMENT, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, AMBASSADORS, CHIEF OF STATE VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 AUG 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LIBREV01088
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740243-0639
From: LIBREVILLE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740876/aaaacngj.tel
Line Count: 114
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: LIBREVILLE 0164
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 APR 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <26 FEB 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DAHOMIAN PRESIDENT KEREKOU'S VISIT TO GABON
TAGS: PFOR, GB, DM, (KEREKOU, MATHIEU)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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